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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
Fifteenth session
15 January-2 February 1996

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN ON ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Ms. Hanna Beate SCHÖPP-SCHILLING (Germany)

Addendum

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 21 OF THE CONVENTION

1. At its ... meeting, on ..., the Committee considered the implementation of article 21 of the Convention (agenda item 5).

2. The item was introduced by the Deputy Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women, who presented the following reports of the Secretariat:

(a) Note by the Secretary-General on reports provided by specialized agencies of the United Nations on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities (CEDAW/C/1996/3 and Add.1-4);

(b) Report of the Secretariat on the analysis of articles 7 and 8 of the Convention (CEDAW/C/1994/4);

(c) Report of the Secretariat on the analysis of article 2 of the Convention (CEDAW/C/1995/4).

A. Action taken by the Committee on the report of Working Group II

3. At its ... meeting, on ..., the Committee considered the item on the basis of the report of Working Group II and took the following decisions.

1. Working paper on general recommendations on articles 7 and 8 of the Convention

4. At its ... meeting, on ..., on the recommendation of Working Group II, the Committee agreed to continue at its sixteenth session, the preparation of general recommendations on articles 7 and 8 of the Convention on the basis of the working paper prepared at its fifteenth session and an additional text to be prepared and supplied to members in the working languages of the Committee well in advance of the sixteenth session. The working paper was prepared after reviewing the draft developed at the Committee's thirteenth session and in the light of developments in the interim (for the text, see ...).

2. Habitat II

5. The Committee adopted a statement on the draft programme for Habitat II (for the text, see ...).

B. Presentation of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund

6. At its 288th meeting, on 16 January 1996, the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) addressed the Committee, stating that the Population Fund would work with other United Nations agencies to inform women's non-governmental organizations and human rights advocates of the work of the Committee. She said that the Fund hoped that such sensitization would enable organizations to monitor the Convention's implementation at the country level.

7. The Executive Director said that the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing in 1995, stated explicitly that the human rights of women and of the girl child are an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The consensus reached at the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo in 1994, had stressed the need for gender equality and equity to enable women to realize their full potential. The Cairo Conference had also urged men to take responsibility for their sexual and reproductive behaviour and family roles.

8. She also indicated that the Beijing Platform for Action had called for a review of laws containing punitive measures against women who had undergone illegal abortion. She added that taking a human rights approach to women's health had implied that national and international policies would be based on the recognition of women's rights.

9. The Executive Director concluded that UNFPA was committed to human rights, and specifically to women's rights. The right to health and the right of couples and individuals to determine the number and spacing of their children had been instrumental in driving its policies.

C. Presentation of the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women

10. At its 297th meeting, on 23 January 1996, the Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) addressed the Committee. She noted that the active participation of Committee members at Beijing had ensured that the Convention would become better recognized as the women's human rights Convention. She said that UNIFEM welcomed the opportunity to support the work of the Committee. She pointed out that the principal aim of UNIFEM was to focus on the political and economic empowerment of women. She noted that the human rights framework was a crucial element in the Fund's analysis of and in understanding and addressing the obstacles to women's empowerment, and pledged to work with the Committee to ensure that commitments made to the world's women in the Beijing Platform for Action were implemented. She cited several concrete examples of UNIFEM support of the Convention, including an expert group on the development of guidelines to incorporate gender perspectives in the human rights work of the United Nations, production with the United Nations Children's Fund of an information kit on the Convention and advocacy for the Convention and women's human rights at Beijing. She also noted collaboration with UNFPA towards a "bill of rights" for women and children. The role of UNIFEM as gender adviser to United Nations Resident Coordinators would include advocacy in support of the Convention. She concluded that development would be unsuccessful if it did not include the gender perspective and that society could fly to new heights only when both wings moved freely.

D. Presentation of the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund

11. The Executive Director of UNICEF addressed the Committee at its 303rd meeting, on 29 January 1996. She underlined the commitment of UNICEF to promoting the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, noting that the two Conventions were mutually reinforcing. She said that UNICEF would continue to work on behalf of women and children, re-energized by the Fourth World Conference on Women, in three priority areas. UNICEF would strengthen its work regarding girl's education, the health of girls and women and women's rights. She offered to strengthen the partnership with CEDAW and to work together in the struggle against the apartheid of gender.

E. Presentation of the statement of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

12. At the 305th meeting, on 30 January 1996, the representative of the Centre for Human Rights presented a statement on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. In the statement, the High Commissioner regretted that he could not be present, but indicated that after the Vienna Conference on Human Rights and the Fourth World Conference on Women, it was a critical time for promoting and protecting the equal status and human rights of women, for integrating gender into the work and activities of all organs and

bodies of the human rights programme, and for strengthening mechanisms and procedures addressing women's status and rights.

13. The High Commissioner provided an update on activities of the Centre for Human Rights in relation to advances in encouraging late or non-reporting States to submit reports to treaty bodies, efforts for human rights education, the participation of treaty bodies in world conferences, the integration of a gender perspective in the work of treaty bodies, the exchange of information with other human rights bodies, the wide dissemination of information about the work of United Nations treaty bodies, developments in the methods of work of treaty bodies, and recent activities of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

14. The High Commissioner underlined the important role of CEDAW in the overall United Nations strategy to promote and protect all human rights and assured the Committee that he would do his best to promote system-wide cooperation and coordination on women's rights and include the women's perspective in new initiatives on the right to development.